

Serial No.: 09/473,904
Filed: December 28, 1999

REMARKS

Prior to this amendment claims 18-36 were pending. Claims 18, 21, 23, 24 and 35 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 20, 22 and 25-32 are amended to depend from allowed claims. Support is found in the claims as filed. No new matter is introduced by way of this amendment.

Telephone Interviews

The Applicants thank the Examiner for the helpful telephone discussions regarding the status of the pending claims. On June 17, the Examiner left a message with Applicants' representative confirming that there was an error on the office action cover sheet regarding the status of the claims. In the telephone message, the Examiner noted that claims 19 and 36 were allowed as noted in the body of the office action. On June 18, 2004, Applicants' representative left a voicemail with the Examiner requesting a time to discuss the status of dependent claims. On July 7, 2004, Applicants' representative and the Examiner discussed the status of dependent claims. The Examiner suggested that Applicants file a paper copy of an amendment to the claims.

Information Disclosure Statement

The Examiner indicated that the information disclosure statement filed on 9/2/03 has been fully considered and entered into the application. Applicants thank the Examiner for this acknowledgement. In addition, Applicants respectfully request acknowledgement that the information disclosure statement filed April 4, 2004 also has been considered. This information disclosure statement was filed following the filing of a request for continued examination but prior to the mailing of an office action. As such, it should have been considered. *See* 37 CFR 1.97(b)(4). In addition, Applicants respectfully request an acknowledgement that all of the references submitted in the information disclosure statement filed April 10, 2000 have been considered. This information disclosure statement was filed in compliance with 37 CFR 1.98 before the filing of a RCE. As such it should be considered by the examiner after the filing of an RCE. *See* MPEP 609 (I)(B)(4). While most references were initialed by the previous examiner, the references on the last two pages of the information disclosure statement were not initialed. Applicants respectfully request acknowledgement that these references have been considered.

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Drawings

The Examiner noted that the Applicants were requested to file corrected drawings.

In response, Applicants are submitting herewith formal drawings. Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to acknowledge that the drawings requirement has been satisfied.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph

Claims 18-36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being incomplete for omitting essential method steps and essential structural cooperative relationships of elements. Applicants respectfully traverse. In addition, the rejection is moot with respect to claims 18, 35 and those that previously depended from these claims.

With respect to claims 19 and 36, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are not incomplete and that they do not omit essential method steps and essential structural cooperative relationships of elements. In addition, the Applicants note that it is their thought that the claims are allowed in light of the telephone discussions with the Examiner. Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to confirm this.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 18, 20-24, 29-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,922,617. Applicants respectfully traverse. Nonetheless, Applicants note that the rejection is moot in light of the cancellation of claims and in light of claim amendments to amend claims to depend from claims that were not rejected. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the canceled claims in a subsequent application.

Allowable subject matter

The Examiner indicated in the office action that claims 19 and 36 were free of the prior art and as such were found to be drawn to allowable subject matter. In addition, in the telephone discussions with Applicants' representative the examiner indicated that claims 19 and 36 were allowable. As such, dependent claims were amended to depend from these allowable claims. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the claims should be in form for allowance.

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CONCLUSION

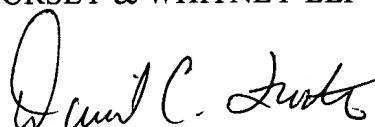
Applicants submit that the claims are now in condition for allowance and an early notification of such is solicited. Please direct any calls in connection with this application to the undersigned at (415) 781-1989.

Respectfully submitted,

DORSEY & WHITNEY LLP

Date: July 8, 2004

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